

Title of Project: Perinatal Initiative Project: "Your Family's Health"

Agency Name: Public Health Foundation Enterprises WIC Program

State: California

Key Word Descriptors: Group education

Description of Project:

The California Endowment is funding the California WIC Association (CWA) in a collaborative year long effort designed to close the prenatal care gaps for immigrant women in three targeted areas; Los Angeles, Riverside and San Diego counties. Six local WIC agencies, including the Public Health Foundation Enterprises WIC Program (PIFE-WIC) are participating in this project to increase Medi-Cal enrollment and prenatal care among WIC participants. The goal is to increase the Medi-Cal enrollment and receipt of on going, regular prenatal care of pregnant WIC women by 15%. Activities include staff training, group and individual participant education, tracking and tagging protocols for participant follow-up, enhanced referral and assistance for enrolling into Medi-Cal and evaluation of the effectiveness of the project.

PHFE-WIC, the lead agency in this project, designed an interactive group education entitled "Your Family's Health" that was presented to participants in all six participating local WIC agencies. This "WIC-IN-A-BOX" education included staff training materials, tracking/tagging protocols, lesson plans (English/Spanish), "Family Scrapbook" props, posters and handouts. This fun and interactive education session was facilitated by WIC para-professionals and resulted in stimulating conversations about prenatal and family health care, options for paying for health care and immigration issues. The scrapbook was a unique departure from previous nutrition education models and received overwhelmingly positive responses from participants and staff.

As a part of this project, the Department of Public Social Services in Los Angeles County partnered with PIFE-WIC to provide DPSS Eligibility Workers (EWs) in WIC Centers. These EWs actively enroll WIC participants into Medi-Cal and are available for follow-up and advocacy for WIC clients. The uniqueness of housing DPSS EWs "friendly and trusted" WIC Centers has facilitated Medi-Cal enrollment for hundreds of WIC participants by reducing the barriers of transportation, language and the "unknown" DPSS office. In addition, PHFE-WIC implemented a "mail-in" application system for Medi-Cal enrollment by distributing and accepting mail-in Medi-Cal applications in WIC Centers, and forwarding them to DPSS workers in the WIC Main Office for processing. DPSS staff working along side WIC staff in both WIC Centers and the WIC Administrative Office is a fantastic first step in coordinating services for our WIC families.

Results of Project:

1. Development of staff training materials and tagging and tracking protocols
2. An increase in staff knowledge on prenatal care, health care payment options, Medi-Cal, prenatal care and Public Charge/Immigration issues.
3. Interactive group education lesson plans for a 15-20 minute group session on "Your Family's Health" that addresses:
 - Why is your family important?
 - The importance of prenatal care
 - The importance of health care for your family
 - Paying for health care
 - Public charge and immigration issues
4. Creation, duplication and distribution of "Family Scrapbook" props (large bound full-color book used by facilitator in group education)
5. Design of a full-color poster promoting prenatal care and WIC participation
6. Improved referrals for prenatal care and Medi-Cal enrollment including contacts with Presumptive Eligibility Providers near WIC Centers
7. Partnerships with the Department of Public Social Services (provision of EWs in WIC Centers and Administrative Office, mail-in application system).
8. Preliminary data are showing increases in prenatal care and Medi-Cal enrollment among WIC participants.
9. By the end of this project, (June 2001), we expect that we will see a 15% increase in prenatal care and Medi-Cal enrollment.

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